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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2015
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [TD](#)
SUBJECT: SPECIAL ANTI-CRIME UNIT OF T&T: LOOKING BACK,
LOOKING FORWARD

Classified By: DCM, Eugene P. Sweeney for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) Brigadier General Peter Joseph, Director of the Special Anti-Crime Unit of Trinidad and Tobago (SAUTT) provided Poloff with a candid assessment of last year's performance in fighting crime, as well as a look forward to ¶2006. Joseph stated that 2005 was a year of building capacity, especially in the area of technology, and trying to forge a cohesive unit out of personnel who come from three distinct agencies: the police force, the defense force and the prisons. Simultaneously, he was asked to demonstrate SAUTT's effectiveness by delivering on arrests. In Joseph's words, they were "asked to creep, walk and run at the same time." In spite of many obstacles, Brigadier General Joseph believes that 2005 was a relatively good year for SAUTT, and that 2006 will be better.

¶2. (C) SAUTT is in phase two of a three-phase plan. Phase one focused on establishing a basis for SAUTT and acquiring technology to help in the fight against crime. Phase two focuses on training to raise the operational effectiveness of the personnel. Phase three moves into developing a recruiting policy that focuses on university degree holders.

¶3. (C) As a part of SAUTT's training program, two police officers from the United Kingdom are slated to arrive in February to work directly with SAUTT agents. They will provide training in DNA evidence collection and operational efficiency. Joseph also intends to cast a wide net for training on all issues, looking for programs in Canada, the US, Israel and the U.K. as well as for trainers willing to come to Trinidad. In January, the GOTT invited and paid for two Department of Justice ICITAP advisors to conduct a site assessment of SAUTT and the prisons system to determine exactly what type of training SAUTT will need to become more operationally effective. The ICITAP report should be completed in March. Joseph also spoke of plans to create a SAUTT training academy in the near future, likely incorporating ICITAP recommendations.

¶4. (C) In 2006, Joseph wants to make a perceptible impact on crime by reducing the murder rate and reducing kidnappings. He also wants to change the perception that people can walk around Trinidad carrying weapons without repercussions. Part of achieving these goals will be to work closely with the police force and other security agencies to supplement their skills with SAUTT's abilities that focus on kidnapping and murders. Joseph mentioned that SAUTT has a hard time working with the Organized Crime and Narcotics Unit, which causes some problems because of organizational turf wars.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: Brigadier General Joseph seems to be a straight shooter who freely admits SAUTT's shortcomings and is unafraid to ask for assistance. Initial ICITAP

observations suggest that a comprehensive overhaul of SAUTT is necessary to convert it into an effective crime-fighting organization. Post is encouraged that SAUTT is now in phase two of their three-phase plan and focusing on training rather than on procuring more technology. In looking at the security apparatus of Trinidad and Tobago, one realizes that although they possess some of up-to-date technology, basic skills are sorely lacking. Post believes that, due to the GOTT's ability to buy the toys they want (such as the much-maligned blimps and alleged attack helicopters), USG assistance should target building up basic skills and creating sustainable, self-perpetuating training programs in Trinidad and Tobago. END COMMENT.

AUSTIN